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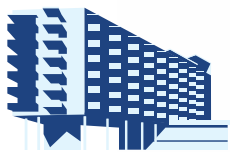
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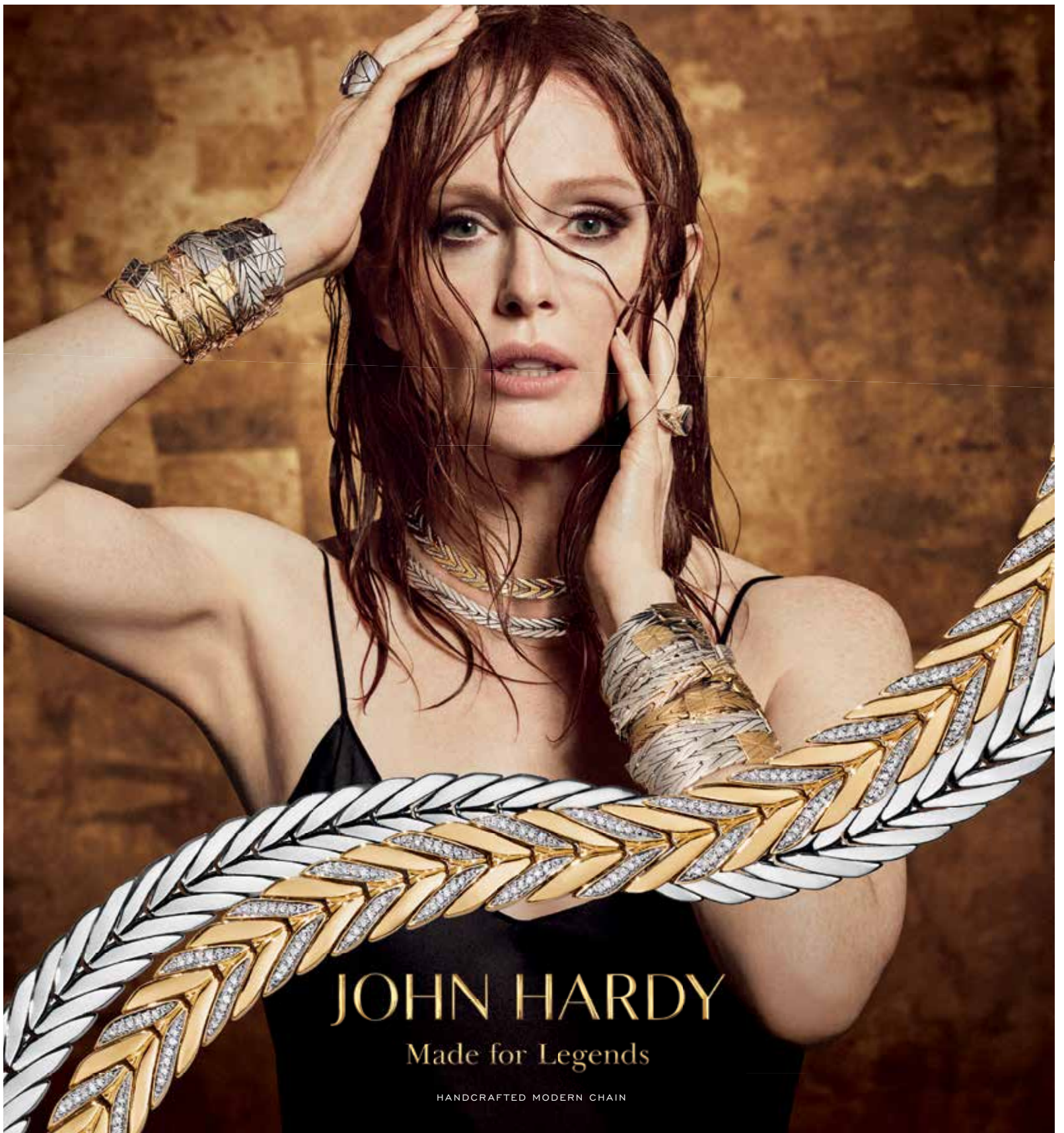
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Island Temptations launches When in Aruba website

On March 1, Island Temptations launched a new island-lifestyle website, When in Aruba. With nearly 16 years and more than 50 editions under our belt, we have had the pleasure of sharing the vibrant culture of this island on the pages of our magazine, and now we are thrilled to expand our readership to a global online audience. Read more about the launch event and what's to come on page 94.

The Island Temptations Team

Our Front COVER

Kathe Narvaez looks stunning in jewelry by David Yurman, available exclusively at Gandelman. Swimsuit and cover-up available at The Juggling Fish Swimwear. Flower crown by Shar's Flowers. Hair and makeup by Bruce Stamper. Jewelry styled by Rona Coster. Art direction by Tina Causey-Bislick. Photography by Steve Keith.



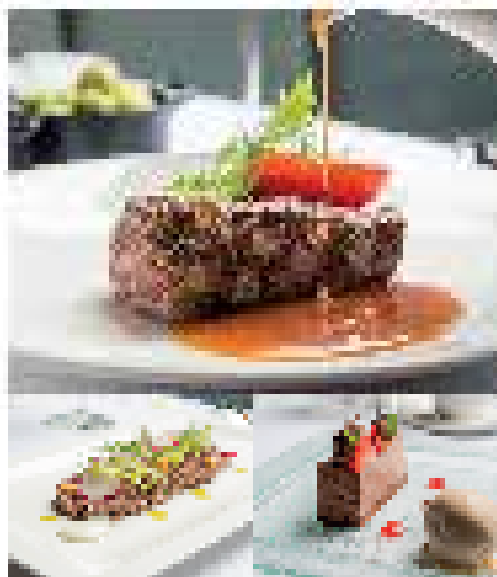
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In the native language of Papiamentu Atardi means late afternoon, which is the time of day when the beach location pops up into the beachfront restaurant Atardi. In a casual, yet elegant atmosphere you'll find the menu filled with delightful seafood from start to finish. Under the leadership of Executive Chef Romeo Penacino, the culinary team is always introducing innovative new items to the menu and is very dynamic when it comes to customizing meals to the needs and pallets of every guest.

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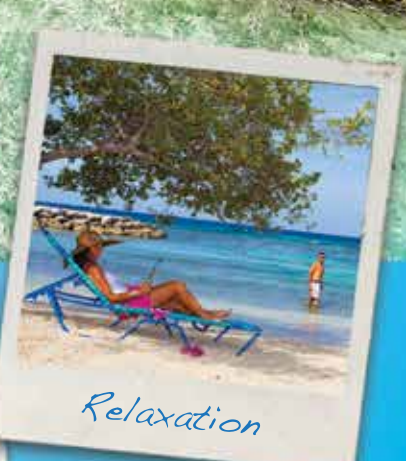
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Pearls Are a Bride's Best Friend

Photography by Steve Keith
Art direction and text by Tina Causey-Bislick
Jewelry styled by Rona Coster

“Pearls are always appropriate.”

Jacky Kennedy

The trending “it” accessory for weddings is pearls. The classic strand of pearls is timeless (Coco Chanel once claimed “a woman needs ropes and ropes of pearls”), but today’s modern bride may want to consider something a bit more updated than the pearls her mother and grandmother wore.

Revolutionary jeweler David Yurman’s love affair with pearls has spawned several collections utilizing the gem in adventurous and unconventional settings. We paired some of his collections, available exclusively at Gandelman, with bridal-inspired swimsuits and cover-ups from The Juggling Fish Swimwear. Shot on location at Villa Bougainvillea, Malmok, and Arashi. Hair and makeup by Bruce Stamper. Flower crowns by Shar’s Flowers. 



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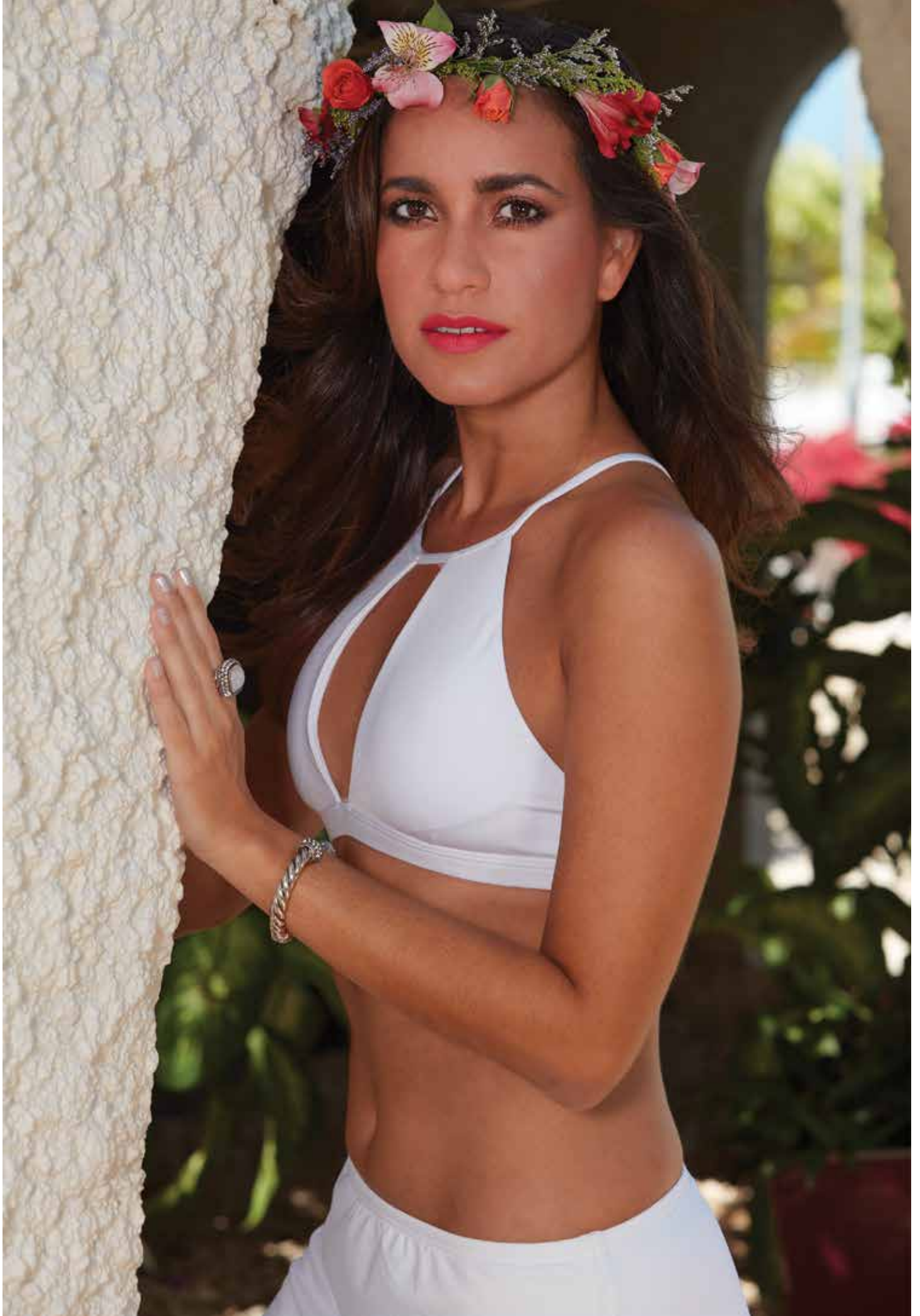
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ARUBA

Crowning Glory

Text by Tina Causey-Bislick
Photography by Steve Keith

Donning a traditional veil for a destination beach wedding may not be the ideal way to accessorize a wedding dress for some brides. Aruba's breezy climate can also make wearing a veil a bit of a challenge. Luckily, not only is a fresh flower crown a lovely alternative to a veil, they are very on-trend for countryside, garden, and island weddings.

For our fashion shoot, we enlisted the talents of Sharon Chatram of the family-owned and -operated Shar's Flowers—one of the most in-demand florists on the island. With nearly 30 years of experience, Shar has worked with hundreds of couples, creating unique décor and bouquets to suit a wide range of tastes and budgets. Shar was chosen to create the welcome bouquets for the Dutch Royal Family for one of their recent visits to the island. For our shoot, Shar constructed five crowns, utilizing various flowers, including orchids, roses, baby's breath, and lilies, as well as a variety of greenery. **T**







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Party On!

Text and Art Direction by Tina Causey-Bislick
Photography by Steve Keith

W

eddings are a joyous time for celebrating, and not just on the the big day—half the fun is enjoying all the extra parties that surround this special time. From engagement parties and bridal showers to bachelor/bachelorette parties and rehearsal dinners, there's definitely a party going on!

Aruba's destination wedding scene is second to none in the Caribbean—creativity and quality in décor and food & beverage allow couples to plan the wedding (and more!) of their dreams. We collaborated with some of the island's best wedding/event planners, florists, resorts, chefs, and bartenders to create six unique events to inspire couples looking for just the right combination of food, drinks, décor, and more! 🍷

Vendors

A special thank you to the following vendors that contributed their time and talents:

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Welcome Dinner/ Rehearsal Dinner

Divi Resorts & Aruba Weddings for You

Kick off those shoes and put those toes in the sand—it's the best way to let your guests know it's time to relax and enjoy this special time on our island paradise! Traditionally, the rehearsal dinner is often an occasion to thank out-of-town guests for taking the extra time and expense to travel to your wedding. But of course when it's a destination wedding, everyone travels. A casual welcome party on the beach sets just the right tone for greeting guests and mingling with one another. It's also an ideal occasion to throw in a few authentic local touches.

Location: Divi All-Inclusive's Sand Piper Bar on Eagle Beach





The Vendors

- Divi Resorts Culinary Team
- The Little One Photo Booth
- Letz Aruba
- The Perfect Team Event Planners
- Koolman's Flowers & Décor
- Eventions
- Coconut Perry





The Menu

- Cheese board display with Morbier, St. Agur blue cheese, truffle pecorino, Brie d'Amir, and Taleggio
- Fresh grilled local mahi mahi, mashed potatoes, fresh vegetables, and pineapple chutney
- New Zealand rack of lamb, fresh vegetables, and red-wine balsamic glaze
- Petit fours of traditional cheesecake, carrot cake bombes, tartlets with caramel & walnuts, and fudge brownies
- Fruit mousse shooters

Beverages:

- Fresh coconut water
- Fruit-infused water
- White and red sangria
- Chilled local beer



Bachelorette/ Bridal Party

The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba

Tea parties aren't just for tots! This afternoon event is perfect for a bridal shower or a sophisticated bachelorette party. You and your girlfriends can enjoy indulgent spa treatments, followed by a tea party with decadent noshes and classic afternoon libations. The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba's culinary team artfully employed whimsical touches, including mason jars and garden décor like mini terracotta pots to complement the tea party theme.

Location: The Spa at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba





The Vendors

- The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba Culinary Team
- Shar's Flowers

The Menu

- Salad of beet and goat cheese, arugula, candied walnuts, and white balsamic vinaigrette
- Caprese salad with balsamic vinaigrette
- Toasted quinoa, carrots, dried cranberries, celery, and champagne vinaigrette
- Duchesse of smoked salmon with cream cheese
- Triple decker vegan bread with mushroom, truffle aioli, red pepper, spinach, and mayo
- Mini Italian finger sandwiches
- Chicken salad on brioche bread
- Assorted macaroons
- Chocolate lollipops
- Dozen dip cake

Afternoon Cocktails

- Earl Grey tea cocktail with elderflower and gin
- Mint julep with bourbon and peach bitters
- Aperol Spritz





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Maggie's



Bachelor Party

Tierra del Sol Resort & Golf

The groom and his buddies can enjoy some bro time on the award-winning 18-hole PGA championship golf course at Tierra del Sol Resort & Golf. After, a sunset cocktail party has mixologists from spirit distributors Pepia Est and Divino shaking up classic craft cocktails that pair perfectly with local cigars hand-rolled on-site by tobacco expert Benjamin Petrochi with Aruhiba Cigars. And why not get that beard cleaned up a bit for the big day? The Man Cave Barber Lounge brings the chair and the barber right to the party!

The Location: The Clubhouse at Tierra del Sol Resort & Golf





The Menu

- Pulled pork sliders with coleslaw
- French onion shooters
- Tuna tartar shooters
- Escargot
- Crab cakes
- Bruschetta and tomato-basil-mozzarella brochettes

Classic Cocktails:

- Old-fashioned with Straight Edge Bourbon
- Brugal rum sour
- Disaronno amaretto sour





The Vendors

- The culinary team from The Restaurant at Tierra del Sol Resort & Golf
- House of Mosaic
- Divino NV
- Pepia Est
- Aruhiba Cigars
- The Man Cave Barber Lounge



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The Big Day

Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino

From sunset to twilight, this ceremony setup lets the scenery and mood created by nature—with a little help from a few twinkling lights and lanterns—create a fairytale ambiance for a dreamy beach wedding. The setup lets guests easily transition from the ceremony to a cocktail reception in the same locale, featuring signature craft cocktails and gourmet bites.

The Location: Beachfront at the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino





The Menu

- Couscous salad on tapas spoons
- Asian chicken tapas spoons
- Red pepper hummus shooters
- Sea bass ceviche shooters
- Sushi display
- Modern passion fruit mousse
- Modern forest fruit cheesecake
- Frozen pears with namelaka cream

Signature Cocktail:

- Hilton's signature Aqua Aloe cocktail





The Vendors

- The culinary team of Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino
- Letz Aruba
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Bohemian Beach Brunch

The day after the wedding is a great time to regroup and bask in the afterglow of the wedding with your family and friends. A casual brunch or picnic on the beach is just the right setting to relax, refuel with great food, and cure a hangover with a little “hair on the dog” in the form of refreshing beach cocktails.

While we do not recommend a DIY wedding event planned from abroad, with the help of a local wedding planner (we used Letz Aruba for this setup), you can save money by contracting a local chef or caterer, like the innovative Chef Ilja Cybulski, and a local bartending/beverage service, like Maarten Thoonen and his vintage Volkswagen Bus, The Little One Aruba.

The Location: Fisherman’s Huts







The Menu

- Roasted duck breast glazed with hoisin, paired with sautéed turnips, edamame radish, and cresson
- Pan-fried halibut, grilled asparagus & Portobello, black truffle sauce, and crispy potato
- Eggplant Parmesan, burrata, avocado, and basil
- Cornish hen saltimbocca, radicchio, arugula with balsamic vinegar, and sage tempura
- Mille-feuille made of vegan quinoa brittle, berries, elderberry blossom syrup, and lemon sorbet

Beach Cocktails:

- Scroppino with local lemon gelato, limoncello, and Villa Sandi Prosecco
- Tamarijn Mojito with Havana Club Rum and local mint
- White wine sangria with local fruits





The Vendors

- Letz Aruba
- The Little One Aruba
- Chef Ilja Cybulski



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Authentic Wedding Journeys



As featured on the
wedding blog of
When in Aruba

Text by Tina Causey-Bislick

Throughout the pages of our Wedding Edition, we have shared inspirations and ideas on how to make the most of an island destination wedding on Aruba. But nothing paints a picture like a real wedding shared by couples who celebrated their wedding here on Aruba.

Our new website, *When in Aruba* (see story on page 94), features a dynamic wedding blog that includes some of the weddings on the following pages. Be sure to visit the site (www.wheninaruba.com) for more inspirational wedding stories and features.

That's Amore!



WEDDING STORIES

New Jersey lovebirds Claudia Coppola and Kiel Ridolfino met while working at the Italian restaurant owned by Claudia's father. Friendship turned into romance, but the couple kept it under the radar for several months before finally letting the family and coworkers in on their secret. "It got more and more difficult as we started to fall in love and couldn't stop flirting with each other," teased Claudia.

When the couple became engaged, they faced a dilemma: "Initially, we expected to have our wedding in Italy, as it is a tradition to get married in the town my family is from, but the idea of a Caribbean wedding had always been a dream of ours," Claudia explained.

The couple had vacationed in Aruba before. "It's our happy place. We love Aruba for its landscapes—sun, sea, and nature everywhere," said the bride. They hired wedding planners Maryla Colandrea and Giuseppe Scotto of Art of Perfection, a company that specializes in luxury weddings abroad, to coordinate their destination wedding—whether it be Aruba or Italy. "Since they, too, are from Italy, it was easy to communicate our needs to maintain traditions and to speak Italian when needed with guests," the couple shared. The wedding planners suggested Aruba, specifically Renaissance Island, a small private island just a short boat ride away from the Aruban mainland. The couple felt complete confidence in their wedding planners, and went ahead and secured the venue, sight unseen. "This made the day of the wedding even more exciting for us—it was not only a surprise for our guests, but an unbelievable one for us as well!"

The Décor

The couple went for a whimsical island-chic atmosphere, wanting the ambiance to feel natural but also luxurious. The couple chose to utilize a lot of greenery matched with a variety of white flowers, accented with touches of gold and silver. "The ceremony had an unbelievable arch that overlooked the water. This palm-leaf arch, together with bamboo chairs, created the island feel we were looking for. With the privacy of the beach, the intimacy of the atmosphere, and the flamingos walking around as we said our vows at sunset, it was like being in a deserted paradise, and that was the feeling we wanted."

The reception was decorated with string lights, candlelight, and lanterns everywhere. "It was truly a whimsical paradise. The rustic feel of the white-

WEDDING STORIES

washed furniture combined with the elegance of the spectacular floral table garlands really brought our idea to life.”

The Attire

Claudia has a background in fashion, formerly working for Kleinfelds, which was a natural choice for the bride when it came to shopping for her gown. “I said ‘yes’ to a Maison Signore gown with an illusion back and delicate lace detailing,” informed the bride. She paired it with Stuart Weitzman wedding shoes. The groom wore Hugo Boss attire and accessories.

The Reception

The couple infused many layers into their reception. A steelpan musician greeted guests for the cocktail hour gathering, where guests enjoyed sushi, pulled pork, lamb chops, lump crab cocktail, lobster fritters with truffle mayo, a ceviche bar, and a variety of other hors d’oeuvres.

A plated dinner—with each place setting marked by a palm leaf with personalized calligraphy—followed, featuring a seafood risotto action station, pan-fried sea bass, and prime rib. A dessert station included a variety of mini Italian pastries. “Coming from a restaurant background, we are a tough crowd to please, but overall the food was tasty,” informed the couple.

The couple combined musicians from Italy, New York, and Aruba to form their band, which played all their favorite old and new songs, with Kiel—who is a musician/singer—joining in. The couple also incorporated local touches like hand-rolled cigars and a troupe of Carnival dancers. The couple made sure the guests stayed well-nourished for the long night of dancing, offering a late-night snack of cheeseburger sliders and coconut shrimp kebabs.

The Vendors

- Ceremony and Reception Location: Renaissance Private Island
- Wedding Planner: Art of Perfection Events
- Décor: Letz Aruba
- Flowers: Shar’s Flowers
- Officiate: Thomas Tyrell (friend of the couple)
- Wedding Cake: W Cakes
- Photography: Lucia Dove Photography
- Music: Sunny Ray Aruba (violinist, steelpan musician, local musicians for dance band collaboration)

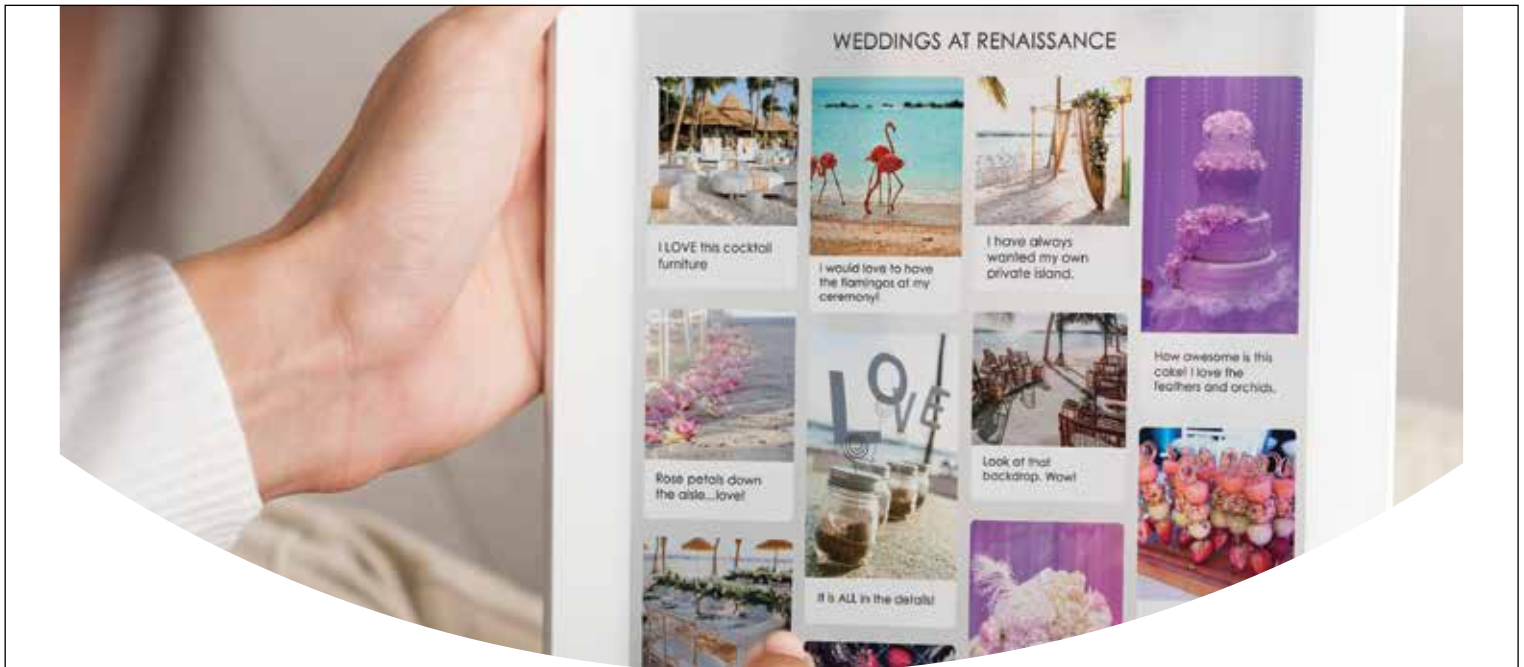




- Additional musicians for the dance band: Alma Y Musica with singers *Ciro Alma* (Italy) and *Mike Latham* (New York)
- Hand-rolled Cigars: *Aruhiba*
- Photo Booth: *Awesome Photo Booth*
- Carnival Dancers: *The Super Dancers*
- Videography: *Alberto D'aria Videography*
- Hair: *Simona Schiano*
- Makeup: *Indulgence by the Sea*

Notes from the Couple

*We had a welcome celebration with cocktails at sunset at Divi Resorts. All of our guests wore white—it was magical. Our Italian singers, *Ciro Alma* and *Ciro Bellocchi*, played guitar and sang, and *Kiel* surprised me with a serenade while our guests gathered on the sand around us. We danced the tarantella, a traditional Italian dance, under the stars—it was incredible! We decided to do a photo shoot a few days after the wedding at the Natural Bridge as a symbol of the beginning of our lives together. The view was spectacular. I wore a palm-themed outfit. The wind in our hair and the ocean brushing against the rocks made it so romantic.*



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Welcome to Aruba, Welcome to the Family!



Sometimes it's life's most difficult challenges that bring us closer together. Mike Iamele and Garrett Lech were college roommates and friends at Northeastern University in Boston, but it wasn't until six years later that they began dating. "At the time, we had recently moved in together with a friend, and Mike had become dangerously ill with a debilitating illness," shared Garrett. Mike continued, "Garrett took care of me, and that's when we started falling in love...we've been together ever since."

Aruba has been a sacred place for Mike Iamele's family for 40 years. Mike's grandparents visited Aruba for the first time in 1978 and bought timeshare shortly after. The island has been the scene for memorable family vacations for Mike every single year of his life. The first time Garrett came to Aruba with Mike's family—five years before the wedding—it was clear to Garrett



that being invited to Aruba meant being invited into the family, and he's felt like a part of it ever since. "We chose Aruba and invited our closest friends and family into our special place and into our family as we married each other," the couple explained.

The Décor

For the big day, the couple wanted a simple yet elegant affair. "We wanted the setup to be understated to allow the magnificence of the beach to speak for itself. Our color scheme was overwhelmingly white, including white sheer cloth draping over the arch and white calla lilies, but we included pops of Caribbean blue in the blue hydrangeas to bring out the colors of the ocean and sky," said Mike and Garrett.



The Attire

The couple opted for a beach formal style to capture the energy of the island wedding, both wearing tailored natural linen pants, white shirts, and identical navy blue suede loafers. Mike wore navy suspenders and a bow tie, while Garrett wore a matching linen vest and a navy necktie to communicate their individual styles.

The Reception

“The reception was at the beautiful Quinta del Carmen. We chose this place for the stunning landscape and architecture, as well as the delicious food and wine. Food is an important part of our relationship, and we wanted to emphasize an elegant three-course dinner with wine pairings over a traditional reception. The team at Quinta del Carmen, including Massy and Martina, was exceptionally professional and organized. They immediately helped us create the feel of an intimate secret garden with an elegant cocktail hour on their front lawn, followed by a private seated dinner in the side garden.”

The Details

- Wedding Planner: Aruba Weddings for You
- Ceremony Location: Divi Rocks on Eagle Beach
- Reception Location: Quinta del Carmen
- Florist: Koolman Flowers
- Officiate: Kristi Gracie (Mike’s sister)
- Photographer: Demian Gibbs
- Transportation: Wix Tours

Notes from the Couple

We had three days of events for our wedding weekend, starting with a welcome happy hour at the Dutch Village Phase 2 pool, followed by a private Kukoo Kunuku party bus pub crawl. On the second day, we enjoyed a relaxing beach day with our guests, followed by a private sunset sail with Red Sail Sports and a casual eve of wedding dinner with live music at Pizza Bob’s (by Costa Linda). Finally, on the day of the wedding, we enjoyed a relaxing pool day with our guests, followed by the gorgeous beach ceremony and reception at Quinta del Carmen. From there, we had an informal after-party at Fusion Wine & Piano Bar next to Albambra Casino.



In addition to the fantastic service at Quinta del Carmen, we do want to highlight how much Aruba Weddings for You went above and beyond, including ensuring that our guests were staying in high-quality rooms, surprising us with hors d'oeuvres at our welcome happy hour, and seamlessly coordinating the entire ceremony.



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Elegance on the Shores of Palm Beach



A vacation on Aruba for Tennessee couple Krystal and Richard Holder was enough to seal the deal. “Aruba is a gorgeous island! Rich and I were on vacation in Aruba, and Rich decided that was the place he wanted to make me his wife,” explained Krystal.

Although deciding on a beach wedding, the couple still wanted an elegant, first-class ceremony and reception, tapping the wedding team at the Hyatt Regency Aruba, led by Roseangela Nuboer, to make their destination wedding dreams come true. “The Hyatt Regency’s wedding coordinator, Roseangela Nuboer, coordinated much of the details for the wedding, and we were inordinately pleased,” the bride shared.





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The Décor

Blush pink, white, and gold were utilized to create a soft and dreamy palette that complemented the sugar-white sands and turquoise waters of Palm Beach. A hanging chandelier and a curtain of crystals decorating the arch were decidedly modern and sophisticated touches. Gorgeous globes of white flowers and white lanterns lined the aisle between gold Chiavari chairs. “The floral arrangements were out-of-this-world beautiful!” exclaimed the bride.

The Attire

“I chose to wear an elegant strapless lace-and-silk mermaid gown by Lazaro. The groom wore a light gray tuxedo with a long, gray tie to distinguish himself from the groomsmen, who wore bow ties. The color combination was perfect.”

The Reception

Guests were ushered from the beach to Hyatt’s Beach Deck event venue, where a premium bar and passed hors d’oeuvres—including Moroccan lamb cigars, mini truffled mac ‘n’ cheese cups, coconut shrimp, and tandoori chicken—were enjoyed.

For the dinner, the Hyatt’s culinary team created a buffet with island-inspired flavors. Caribbean fish ceviche, roasted pork shoulder, seafood chowder, fresh local mahi mahi presented in banana leaves, and a decadent dessert buffet were just a few of the culinary delights. Said Krystal, “The food was delectable and power-packed with flavor—Chef Vincent outdid himself! We had the most elegant buffet I had ever seen, and the service was unmatched.”

The Details:

- Ceremony Location: Beachfront at the Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort, Spa & Casino
- Reception Location: Hyatt’s Beach Deck
- Flowers: Koolman’s Flower Shop & Décor
- Officiant: Geoffrey Banfield
- Wedding cake: Hyatt’s culinary team
- Photography & Videography: Designs by JK
- Steelpan music: Mai Arend
- Deejay: DJ Monk with Elite Productions
- Lighting: Elite Productions



Notes from the Bride

Overall, the Hyatt Regency was extremely accommodating. If I had to do it all over again, I would select the same location with the same vendors, with the very same menu. It was all outstanding and first class! Our guests are still raving about the event. I had a special assistant, Fanny, assigned to help me for the day, and she was an added touch of class. She removed so much stress from the day, and I was so grateful for this added service.

Aruba is one of the most gorgeous islands I have ever visited. It has it all! De Palm Island for the kids (and adults who wish to be kids for a day) was great. I love that I can visit Aruba and have a relaxing, serene vacation, or I can enjoy a fun-filled itinerary of activities if I choose to. I am excited to plan our next family vacation to Aruba. There is no place like it!



Loretti Design Studio

The Loretti Design Studio in Aruba is a place to create and to develop. Each product is made by hand and developed into a unique design. Curator of the studio and artist Deborah de Weerd, with a background in textile design, is inspired by her passion for color and eye for detail.



Using an eclectic variety of materials, she continuously explores to create unique designs, presenting her work under the name Loretti Design. The landscapes, textures, and light impressions found in Aruba influence her sculptural work. You can visit the Loretti Design Studio, located at Paradera Park 203.

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Saving Lives & Sharing a Life Together



Soraya Alvarez, born and raised in the Bronx, and Kellan Squire, a Florida native now living in NYC, spend their days saving lives working for the FDNY—she as a paramedic, he as an EMT. This dynamic duo fell in love on the job, and once engaged, decided that a destination wedding in an exotic locale would be the ideal alternative to their hectic city lives—a place their close family and friends could enjoy as well. Aruba’s reliably sunny weather sealed the deal!

Soraya’s organizational skills and attention to detail prompted her to shoulder much of the wedding planning herself. She researched wedding styles and trends and decided on a rustic décor softened by a blush pink color scheme. The bride did her homework to find just the right place that could bring her vision to life, deciding on the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino. “I was referred to Jessika. She made everything so much easier for us—everything was literally one email away,” Soraya enthused.





| WEDDING STORIES |

The Décor

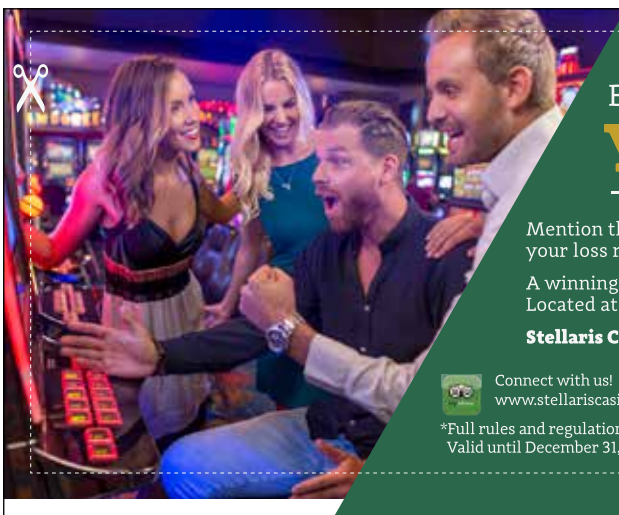
Soraya's ideas for a rustic beach wedding came to life with a dark wood pergola-style arch draped in sheer white fabric. Matching wood chairs and lanterns lining the aisle finished the look.

The Attire

The bride wore an all-lace, mermaid-style dress that was originally strapless, which she custom altered to have an open back with spaghetti straps. The ladies in the wedding party, who went barefoot with foot jewelry, wore short dresses in a blush pink color. The groom and the men in the wedding party wore light-beige linen suits, accessorized with cool sunglasses and matching watches gifted to them by the couple. This modern couple bucked convention, with Soraya having a "man of honor" and Kellan a "best woman," as her best friend is a man, his best friend a woman.

The Reception

There were 21 guests plus the couple, so Soraya and Kellan wanted an intimate setting for the reception. One white-washed long wood table with a burlap runner was set up on the beach under a large, canopied pergola enhanced with white lights. Lanterns and compact centerpieces with white and blush flowers adorned the table. Guests dined on fresh red snapper and tenderloin. The two-tier wedding cake was vanilla with cannoli filling.



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The Details

- Wedding Planner: The wedding team at the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino
- Ceremony & Reception Location: Beachfront at the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino
- Flowers: Shar's Flowers
- Décor: Letz Aruba
- Wedding Cake: W Cakes
- Music: Steelpan by Sharp
- Photography: Demian Gibbs
- Food & Beverage: Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino

Notes from the Couple

We rented a modern six-bedroom home for ourselves and the bridal party for six nights, which is a bargain for those looking to budget certain aspects of their wedding. I created an itinerary of what we were doing day by day, including all the times and prices of everything, for those who wanted to join us on our excursions.

We are so happy to have had the opportunity to be able to share our experience in Aruba, as it was breathtaking! We loved the island and hope to visit again.



Perfectly Romantic

Veronica Garzon-Kashani and John Kashani have been coming to Aruba from their home in New Jersey since 2013. “Every single time we have been to Aruba, we have loved the happy people and the Happy Island. We knew we always wanted a destination wedding, and Aruba was our first and only choice,” they said. The couple wanted their wedding on the beach and knew they could count on Aruba’s reliably sunny weather. “Having our friends and family was important, and we knew Aruba was a close destination with a flight of less than five hours. We knew our friends and family would love the island as much as we do!”

The Décor

Veronica and John didn't have an overall theme, simply wanting to embrace the setting. They used a color scheme of soft whites, blush, and soft gold to create an ambiance that was both romantic and elegant. “I wanted our day to be remembered by the soft tones and the amazing sunset during our ceremony,” shared Veronica.

The altar was draped in sheer white and accented with a garland that combined white hydrangeas with pink and creamy-white roses. Gold Chiavari chairs for guests were also complemented with sheer white draping.

The Attire

Veronica chose a dress by Lazaro. “I wanted a light, flowy dress for the windy sunset by the beach. The combination of the lace, the layers of tulle, the sweetheart neck, and the crystal details on the waist was perfect. I loved every single detail of my dress,” shared the bride, who opted for a pair of silver Jimmy Choo shoes to complete the look. “For hair and makeup, I used Bruce Stamper. He was great; he understood what I wanted, and after a trial, I knew I would have him help me with my hair and makeup.” The groom wore a heather-gray Hugo Boss suit with a crisp, white Hugo Boss shirt and a metallic tie with hues of pink to complement the overall color scheme.





The Reception

After the ceremony, an extended cocktail party, held on the resort's scenic Van Gogh Terrace and featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres, helped kick off the festivities. "We definitely wanted to do things differently. We wanted our guests to eat and enjoy all the food before the reception (held in the resort's ballroom) so that they could dance and party longer. It worked great!" The couple chose to feature a "Taste of The Ritz-Carlton," with tasty bites of signature menu items from various restaurants at the resort. The spread included a farmer's-market-style salad station; sushi from Divi Lounge; several Italian specialties from Solanio, including wild mushroom ravioli, grilled jumbo shrimp, and meatballs; mini popovers and carved prime tenderloin from BLT Steak; mahi mahi tacos, chicken tacos, and snapper ceviche from Madero; fresh shucked oysters; and passed hors d'oeuvres like tandoori chicken, empanadas, and coconut-crusted shrimp. The couple and their guests then danced the night away in the ballroom of The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba, snacking on a buffet of late-night munchies and a dessert buffet, as well as the red-velvet wedding cake.





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The Details

- Ceremony Location: Beachfront at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba
- Reception Location: Ballroom of The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba
- Décor: Letz Aruba and House of Mosaic
- Flowers: Shar's Flowers
- Officiant: Geoffrey Banfield
- Hair & Makeup: Bruce Stamper
- Photography: Crooze Photography
- Videography: Iluzion Studios
- Entertainment: Sunny Ray, featuring Lucre Woutman

Notes from the Couple

We had the wedding we always dreamed about! Aurienne, our wedding planner, was amazing—she made everything easier—and of course, The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba and all of its employees being so welcoming made the entire experience for us and our guests perfect. Our guests loved the experience, and months later they are still talking about our wedding, and that's priceless!



Childhood Sweethearts Say “I Do” on Renaissance Island

Christina Zandler met Anthony Costello when they were just twelve years old. The childhood sweethearts had their first vacation together when they came with Anthony’s family to Aruba as teenagers and have returned to the island many times since.

When the couple was ready to tie the knot, Aruba was their first choice. “We knew about the weather always being perfect and the beautiful sunsets, so we figured we couldn’t go wrong,” shared the couple. “We wanted a true destination wedding with privacy from open beaches, and Renaissance Island provided that. After meeting with the wedding/banquet planners, we knew it was the perfect place!”

The Décor

The lush environs of Renaissance Island provided such a gorgeous backdrop that the couple decided to embrace the magical beach setting and let it speak for itself for the ceremony. A soft color combination of dusty blue and pale yellow blended seamlessly with the natural setting.

The reception décor included cylinder centerpieces filled with water and fresh orchids lit by LED lights. “The up-lighting added a really nice touch to the overall atmosphere as the sun went down,” shared Chrissy.

The Attire

Chrissy wore a sheath-style wedding dress with a low back. “Because I was getting married on the beach, I didn’t want a heavy ball gown with a long train,” the bride explained. The groom wore a gray tuxedo with vest and tie, sleeves rolled up, sans jacket.

The Reception

After the ceremony, guests enjoyed a cocktail hour and hors d’oeuvres, which included noshes like pecan-crusted lamb medallions, crab cakes,





chef-carved roasted prime rib, sushi, an antipasti display, and the signature cocktail—coconut martinis. A plated dinner followed, featuring choices like prawns and tenderloin, and blackened chicken with grilled polenta.

The couple had the deejay booth set out on the water, with the dance floor set up right at the shoreline. To keep their guests well nourished for plenty of dancing, a late-night s'mores station was offered.

The Details

- Ceremony and Reception Location: Renaissance Private Island
- Flowers: Elsa's Flower Shop
- Arch: E2 Events
- Lounge Seating: Birthdays and More
- Dance Floor and Deejay Booth: Thunder n' Lightning
- Wedding Cake: W Cakes
- Photography: Crooze Photography
- Ceremony & Cocktail Hour Music: Alain Tromp and Mario Chow
- Reception Music: DJ Tino from Cyclone Promotions
- Videography: Schwaaw Films
- Hair & Makeup: Jennive from Hi-Fashion
- Transportation: Kukoo Kunuku



Notes from the Couple

We used the Kukoo Kunuku buses to pick our guests up from each of their hotels and transport them to Renaissance to board the boats to the private island. What a great way to get the party kicked off on the right foot!

For my bridal party and myself, we used Jennive from Hi-Fashion. She was so pleasant to work with and paid attention to all my girls' requests. She truly is an artist and turned me into a gorgeous bride. It truly was amazing to be able to spend such great quality time with all of our family and friends for a full week in beautiful Aruba. The day after the wedding, we chartered one of the Jolly Pirates' ships for a private sail and snorkel adventure exclusively for all of our wedding guests to enjoy with us. It was our way of thanking them all for making the journey.



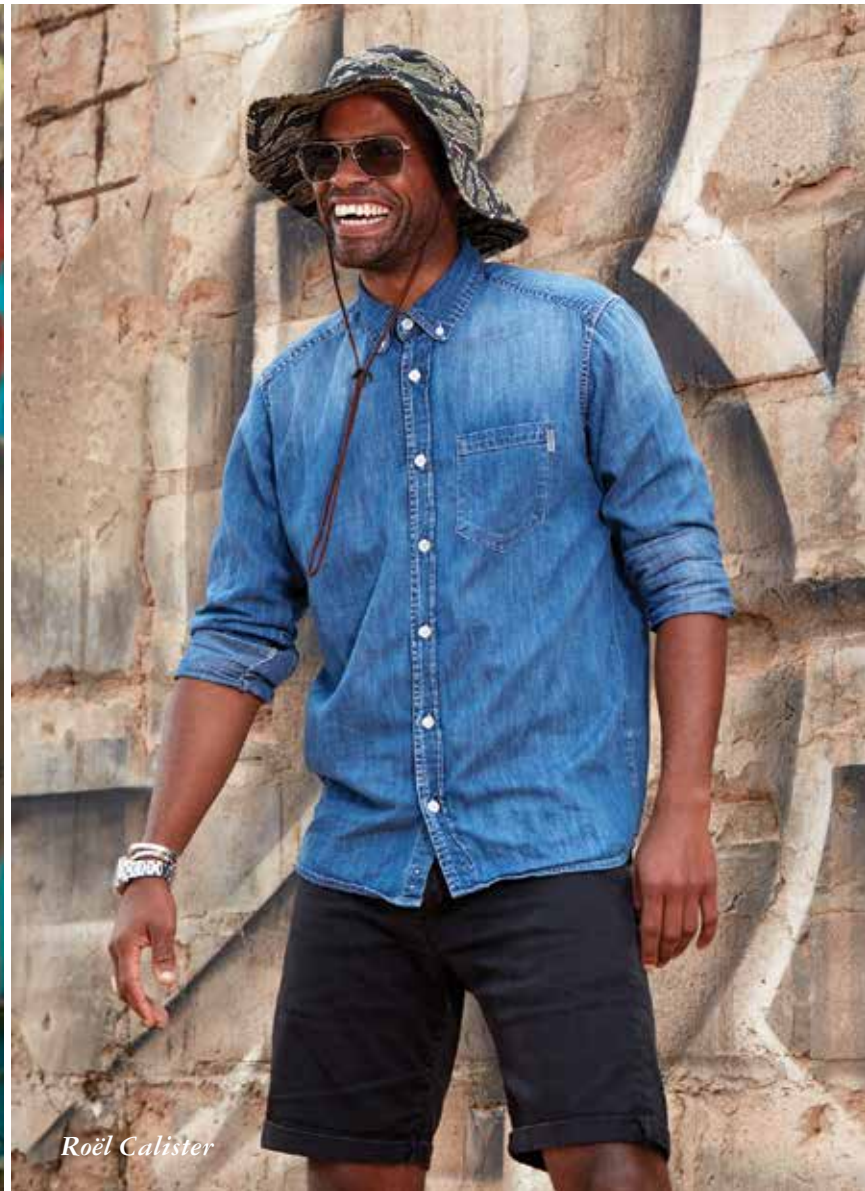


Kuenta i Tāmbu

Text by Tina Causey-Bislick
Photography by Steve Keith



Diamanta von Liesbdek



Roël Calister

The rhythm is contagious!

Back in 2014, *Rolling Stone* had them on the “10 Artists You Need to Know” list. Today, many people in Europe know them, thanks to their dedication to hitting the road and touring throughout Europe. If you don’t know them, let me make some introductions: meet Kuenta i Tambu, aka KiT, a band with a sound like no other.

This eclectic, colorful group of musicians includes founder, leader, and frontman Roël Calister (Curacao), lead vocalist Diamanta von Liesbdek (Aruba), percussionists Daniel Camacho (Aruba)

and Yariv Vroom (Suriname), and deejay Vijay Weemhoff (the Netherlands).

This past December, Kuenta i Tambu took a break from their European tour for pit stops in Aruba and Curacao to refuel on some homegrown Caribbean vibes, reconnect with family and friends, and introduce their newest CD, *RAIS* (“roots” in Papiamentu, the creole language of Curacao, Aruba, and Bonaire), during several live shows. For some of Aruba’s younger generation, this was their first exposure not only to Kuenta i Tambu, but also to



Vijay Weemboff



Daniel Camacho

the flavors of traditional Afro Caribbean music and the rhythms of tambú drums, which is exactly what Roël’s original mission was when forming the band—to share the Afro Caribbean culture and musical roots of Curacao.

Kuenta i Tambu means “words and drums” in Papiamentu, but this band’s intoxicating beat-driven music goes beyond words and drums to deliver a surprising balanced symphony of percussion, singing, chanting, and samples of electronic dance. “Tambú is not just the name of the drum, it’s the way you play the drums, the emotions and energy coming off you and the drums, the feeling people get listening to the music—it’s a culture all its own,” explains Roël. “And it’s also the singing, the chanting, the foot stomping, and clapping and dancing—it’s what we grew up with and a part of who we are. We took that and crossed it with everything we have learned to love in Europe—the electronic, four-on-the-floor (a pattern of rhythm common in disco), and different types of genres—and fused that into one big explosion,” adds Diamanta.

But to truly experience Kuenta i Tambu, you have to see them live. I dare you to even think about



Yariv Vroom

sitting this one out—the energy is contagious. “When we share our music, we share it with everything we have,” says Diamanta. The audience is on their feet, jumping, swaying, and winin’. Roël and Diamanta explain, “The most important thing in our show is that the audience is never the audience; the audience is actually part of the show, part of the band, and that’s how we make them feel. We make them sing along with us, clap, dance. Without the energy they give us, there is no Kuenta i Tambu!”

Check out the band’s website, www.kuentaitambu.com, and follow them on Facebook to keep up with their latest videos and information on upcoming concert dates. 📱

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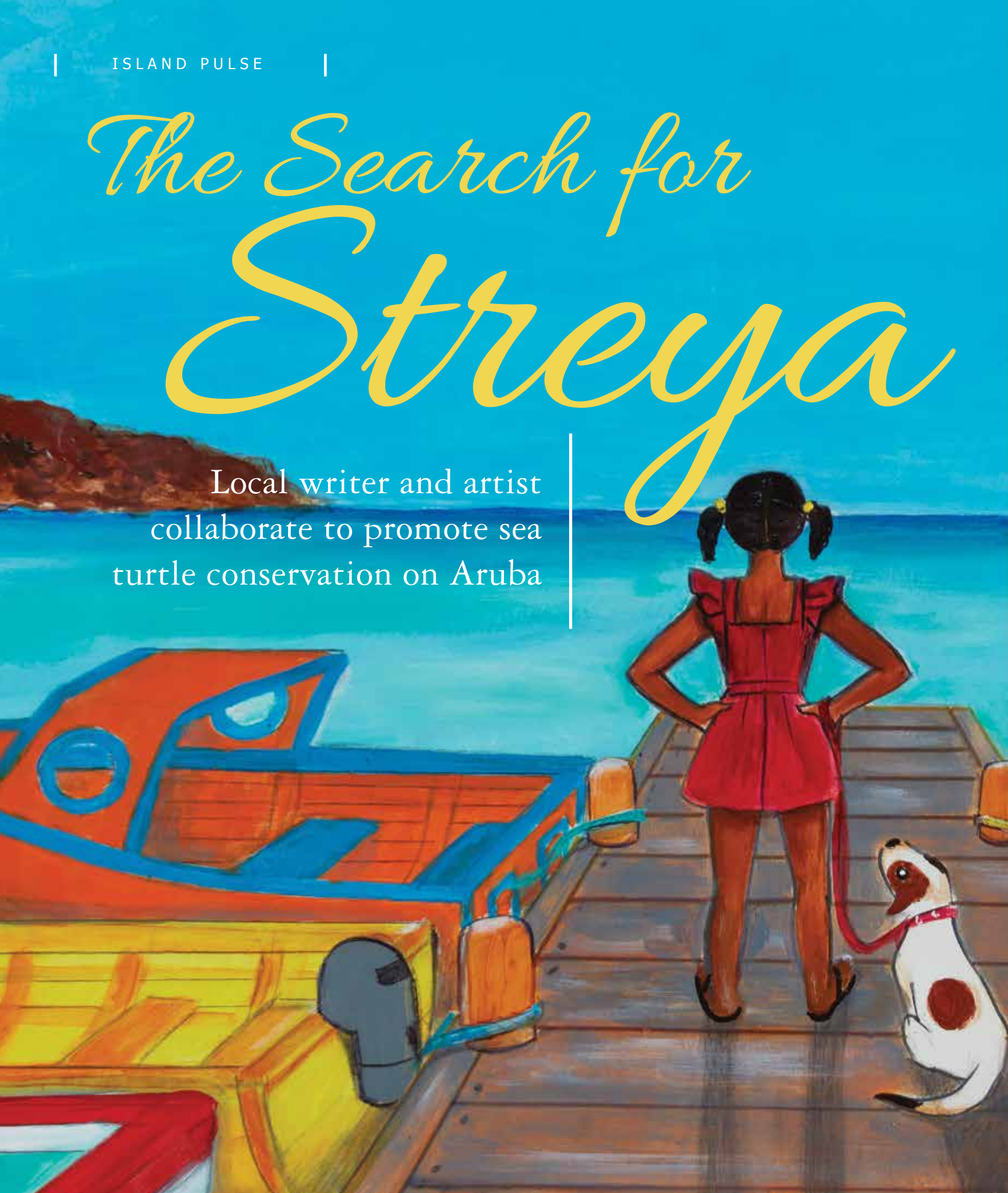
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The Search for Streyya

Local writer and artist collaborate to promote sea turtle conservation on Aruba



Text by Tina Causey-Bislick
Photography by Steve Keith


I met artist Vanessa Paulina 16 years ago. I saw some of her paintings on display at the clubhouse of Tierra del Sol Resort & Golf. I could not take my eyes off of one of her paintings, which depicted a cherubic Caribbean boy. He had this unmistakable twinkle in his eyes that pulled me in. The artist was as intriguing as her paintings—we had an instant connection, and she was the subject of the first article I ever wrote about an artist and has remained a good friend ever since.

About ten years ago, I decided to venture into children's fiction. The island of Aruba would be the setting, and a mystical sea turtle named Streya and two local children would be my main characters. Who better to depict the spirit of two beautiful Aruban children than Vanessa? She loved the idea and waited patiently for me to finish my rough draft so she could bring my characters to life on canvas.

Lots of patience was required. I started, stopped, scrapped it all, and started over again so many times. I am seasoned in producing news articles and magazine features by the dozen on a weekly basis, but this was a completely different ball game. One would think that writing a children's book would be easy—it's not like I have to write an 80,000-plus-word novel. But when writing for children, word count is the challenge. Many publishers prefer picture books for children to be under 1,500 words. I would set the project aside again and again, frustrated that I could not tell the story the way I wanted to. One day, I went back to some of the books my kids loved growing up—specifically the masterfully illustrated and award-




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winning books *The Polar Express* and *Jumanji* by Chris Van Allsburg. My kids could not get enough of these books, and we read and re-read them many times—all 3,000-plus words! Maybe publishers, in general, are not giving our youth enough credit when it comes to reading and their attention spans; maybe they're not placing enough importance on the introduction of new and sometimes challenging words to help children grow their vocabulary. I know from my own experience and the incredible bonding we had as a family reading books—if it's a good story, they will stay tuned in.

About a year ago, I was finally able to read my rough draft to Vanessa. When she had tears in her eyes and said, "I can't wait to paint your words," I knew we were on the right track as a team!

Vanessa went to the drawing board and presented me with her vision of the characters in the book—she nailed it! Next, we had to decide on all the details: hairstyles, clothing choices, and colors. We drove all through Mangel Halto and Savaneta, picking certain aspects of the landscape and various wooden docks and local fishing boats to use as inspiration for the settings in the book. Vanessa then worked on the final images to match the story from page to page. Once it was completed, I didn't want to wait the months, or even years, that it takes to have a major publishing house possibly accept a book. Self-publishing was the way we wanted to go.



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Aruba's close-knit community is very supportive of its artists, writers, musicians, and performers. Several resorts and local companies believed in us and our project, offering to pre-purchase books so that we could raise enough funds to take it to print. We reached our goal, and the book arrives on the island in April of 2018!

Vanessa and I are eternally grateful to the following companies and organizations that contributed, thereby helping us take *The Search for Streya* to print: Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino; Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino; Tropicana Aruba Resort & Casino; The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba; Aruba Tourism Authority; Botica di Servicio; Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino; and De Palm Tours. 🙏



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Launch Party

The creative team behind the glossy pages of *Island Temptations* magazine has taken an exciting leap into the digital world with its brand new website—*When in Aruba*. Through incredible imagery, breathtaking videos, and inspiring stories told through authentic voices, the dynamic site portrays the beautiful island of Aruba in its best light.

The *When in Aruba* team hosted a launch party on March 1 at the Alhambra Ballroom, inviting many of the island’s movers and shakers to celebrate the debut of this new platform that aims to attract visitors to the island as well as serve as a resource for locals. Rona Coster, co-owner of the new website, commented, “People are increasingly choosing where and how they want to spend their vacation dollars by researching online. *When in Aruba* not only capitalizes on this trend, but goes well beyond the stale, static website by featuring a regularly updated blog that highlights everything from restaurant news and the latest wellness offerings to destination wedding inspiration and cultural events. Businesses on the island will have the opportunity to list their products and services on the site as well, making it easy for vacationers to plan their trip to Aruba. The site showcases gorgeous photography and videography. Trust me, Aruba never looked so good!”

Invited guests included tourism officials, hotel executives, restaurateurs, and local business owners. As guests arrived at the launch party, they were met with a large screen featuring the brand new site being





navigated in real time. Two touch screens provided guests with the opportunity to navigate the site themselves. As guests got their first peek at the website, they noshed on passed hors d'oeuvres provided by the Divi Resorts culinary team and sipped on cocktails from the open bar. Local drummer Michael Bislick and DJ Rustica kept the party vibe going with some lounge-style tunes.

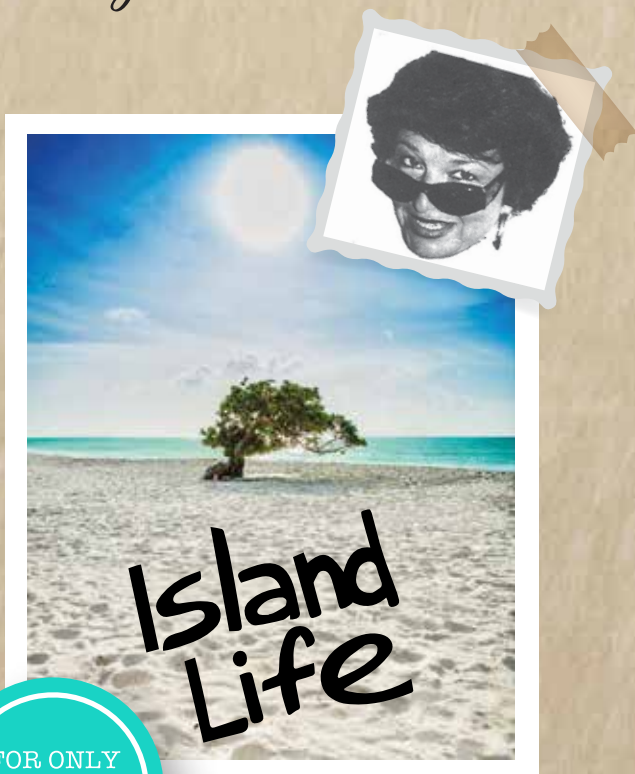
Owners of the website, Rona Coster and Tina Causey-Bislick, both shared some words about how *When in Aruba* came to be and their vision for its future. Tina shared, "When in Aruba aims to be one of the top go-to sites for tourists planning a Caribbean vacation. One look at the site and its gorgeous imagery, and they'll have their hearts set on visiting our paradise island. It's also going to serve as an incredible tool as they plan exactly what they plan to do, see, and eat while here." Tina underscored the fact that *When in Aruba* will be a highly dynamic site and will work seamlessly with its social media platforms to promote Aruba. Furthermore, she pointed out that *When in Aruba* is the only tourism-driven destination website in the Caribbean to prominently feature the LGBTQ community as a valuable tourist demographic. Also, its gorgeous wedding and romance blog serves

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as a valuable resource for the growing destination wedding market.

Tina and Rona also shared some words of gratitude with developer of the site, Create. "We're so pleased that we used a local firm to develop our site. We had an instant connection with the team, who believed in our project from the start. We're so grateful to Tristan Every, Rudy Croes, and the rest of the Create team for bringing our vision to life with this gorgeous site."

Visit the website at www.wheninaruba.com. Businesses interested in having a listing on the website should contact info@wheninaruba.com.



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